

CUSTOM BUS

What is a Custom Bus?

Custom Bus service was established by King County Metro specifically to carry large groups of commuters to destinations not served by regular transit service. Riders use a special premium pass, or pay a daily cash fare to use the service.

The participating employer or group of employers must pay 80 percent of the operating cost for each Custom Bus route. A minimum of 30 riders per Custom Bus is required by Metro.

What are the benefits of Custom Bus?

To Employers:

- responds quickly to requests for bus service (new service can be implemented in about 10 weeks);
- shares costs with Metro and employee;
- reduces demand for employee parking;
- develops routes and schedules tailored to worksite needs;
- limited stops along the route;
- dedicated customer service telephone line for riders.

To Employees:

- can decrease commute time, since custom buses can use HOV lanes;
- can schedule arrival and departure times around shift or schedule requirements;
- creates express service to worksite;
- provides dedicated telephone line for customer service;
- can travel with co-workers and other familiar passengers.

Note: Currently, Custom Bus passes are accepted on any regular Metro bus or vanpool throughout the week. Some Custom Bus riders may be able to use local bus service as a back-up commuting method.

How does Custom Bus help meet CTR goals?

Express bus service is a great incentive to commute by transit. Transit services, such as Custom Bus, eliminates more single-occupant vehicle (SOV) trips and reduces more vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per employee than carpool or vanpools.

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What are favorable conditions for Custom Bus?

Custom bus is most successful when:

- transit service is limited— Custom Buses typically serve large employment centers located away from areas well served by other transit
- a large number of employees have similar work schedules, commute to the worksite daily and live in one general area, or along a logical commuting path.

How much does a Custom Bus cost?

The employer is required to guarantee 80 percent of a route's operating cost. This means the employer buys 30 or more transit passes per month.

Metro calculates the operating cost, cost-sharing arrangements, route structure and cost of the pass for each route based upon demographic information submitted by the employer. This information includes the length of the route, the number of commuters in a cluster, and the communities and neighborhoods to be served.

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

Q. Who drives Custom Buses?

A. Regular Metro drivers operate custom buses.

Q. Why does a Custom Bus pass cost more than a regular Metro bus pass?

A. Because Custom Buses are designed to meet specific employer needs, the King County Council requires the route to have different cost recovery goals (this is confusing language) than regular Metro transit service.

Q. What happens if I miss my Custom Bus?

A. Flextime and Guaranteed Ride Home are programs that support Custom Bus service. Custom Bus passes are also accepted on Metro buses for one and two-zone trips. In some cases, employees can use regular Metro bus service as a back up to express custom bus service.

Q. Can other Metro bus riders board a Custom Bus?

A. Yes.